

Capitulation

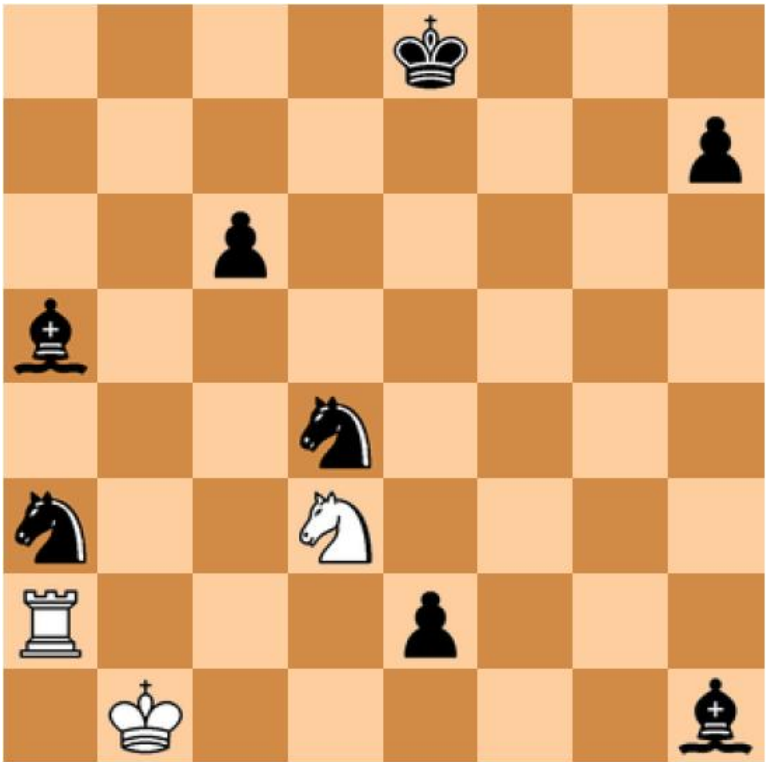
“Share your fish with everyone.”

—John So

A combination of curiosity and boredom gets the better of you, and you start poking around the cramped office, starting with the stationery. You are halfway through constructing a post-it note pyramid when your eyes land on the shimmering fountain pen resting on its mahogany stand. It couldn't hurt to scribble a line or two, could it? Reaching out, you gently untwist the delicate amber handle and watch in disgust as greyish powder slowly pours out onto the table. You've heard of 'novelty' before, but this is beyond ridiculous—a Mont Blanc salt and pepper shaker?

After doing some more exploring, you begin to suspect that Van Rjien must have a bizarre sense of humour. A tissue box turns out to be a shredder; a broken clock pinned to the wall reveals its true form as a potential kettle; and even the moose head trophy resting atop the bookcase was just a well disguised bunny rabbit. You begin to feel dizzy, and lower yourself onto the unoccupied chair by the computer.

You glance at the screen, and see that Van Rjien is in the middle of a game of online chess. Or rather, was in the middle of a game of chess—neither party has made a move for hours and the only line in the conversation box is “What have we here?”. You sense that what you are looking at isn't your run-of-the-mill abandoned game of chess.



—Ray Komatsu